Application Ref: NP/14/0244

Application Type	Full
Grid Ref:	SN02773925
Applicant	Mr T Curtis
Agent	Mr A Lawrence, Reading Agricultural Consultants
Proposal	Cattle accommodation building, dairy building & associated concrete hardstanding
Site Location	Fforest Farm, Newport, Pembrokeshire, SA42 0UG
Case Officer	Liam Jones

Summary

The application is reported to the Development Management Committee as it is a Major Development application having regard to the total new floor space created which exceeds 1000 square metres.

The application is one of two planning applications submitted at Fforest Farm and proposes the construction of a new cattle accommodation building, dairy building and concrete hardstanding.

Following an assessment of the planning merits of the proposal it is concluded that the buildings proposed will allow an increase production, welfare and efficiency on site with buildings to improve the agricultural enterprise on a whole. The buildings and extent of agriculture to take place will have no adverse impact upon the special qualities of the National Park and are designed sympathetically to the existing environs of the site.

Subject to conditions to control the extent of development including highway access improvements and provision of landscaping the scheme is considered to meet with the aims of Planning Policy Wales (Edition 6, February 2014), Technical Advice Note 6 – Planning for Sustainable Rural Communities (TAN 6, July 2010) and policies 1, 7, 8, 9, 15, 29, 30, 31, 32, 33, 34, 52 and 53 of the Pembrokeshire Coast National Park Local Development Plan (Adopted 2010) and is recommended for approval.

Consultee Response

Natural Resources Wales: Request determination of the application is deferred to allow for further information to be submitted with regard to the slurry storage on the farm. Additional information received from applicant 30 June 2014 confirming existing slurry total inputs as being 3,778m3 and total proposed inputs being 4,895m3. 8 July 2014 Revised response received confirming no objection to the proposal.

Weish Government Trunk Road Agency: Reply - 27 May 2014 - Initial response received directed that the Authority refuse the application by reason of the development generating increased use of a substandard access and the additional stopping and turning manoeuvres would lead to conditions prejudicial to the safety and free flow of traffic on the front road.

2 July 2014 - Second response received following receipt of Transport Statement advises that the information received is sufficient to remove the objection although direct that the conditions (associated with the racing stables) are carried out prior to beneficial use of the **ca**ttle accomodation building.

Natural Resources Wales: No objection

PCC - Transportation & Environment: No objection

Access Officer: No objection

Newport Town Council: No objection - We approve of the application finding the design to be fit for purpose and suitable within the context and support the need to upgrade the facilities.

Dwr Cymru Welsh Water: No Response Received

Dyfed Archaeological Trust: No Response Received

Tree and Landscape: No Response Received

PCC - Head of Public Protection: No adverse comment

Public Response

The application was advertised by display of site notices at the site access on 2 June 2014. In addition the application was advertised as a Major Application and development affecting a public right of way in the local press on 30 May 2014. No letters of representation have been received to date.

Policies considered

Please note that these policies can be viewed on the Policies page Pembrokeshire Coast National Park website http://www.pembrokeshirecoast.org.uk/default.asp?PID=549

LDP Policy 01 - National Park Purposes and Duty

LDP Policy 07 - Countryside

LDP Policy 08 - Special Qualities

LDP Policy 09 - Light Pollution

LDP Policy 15 - Conservation of the Pembrokeshire Coast National Park

LDP Policy 29 - Sustainable Design

LDP Policy 30 - Amenity

LDP Policy 31 - Minimising Waste

LDP Policy 32 - Surface Water Drainage

LDP Policy 34 - Flooding and Coastal Inundation

LDP Policy 52 - Sustainable Transport

LDP Policy 53 - Impacts on traffic

PPW6 Chapter 04 - Planning for Sustainability

PPW6 Chapter 08 - Transport

- SPG05 Sustainable Design
- SPG06 Landscape
- SPG20 Siting and Design of New Farm Buildings
- SPG21 Accessibility
- TAN 02 Planning and Affordable Housing
- TAN 06 Planning for Sustainable Rural Communities
- TAN 12 Design

Officer's Appraisal

The application site forms part of Fforest Farm which extends to a holding area of 130ha, of which 120ha is owned with the remaining land rented under informal agreements. The majority of the land farmed by the applicant consists of fields north of the A487 along with a small area of land south of the road which is used for summer grazing only.

There is currently a herd of 200 milking cows at the farm which are housed in 230 cubicles using sand and bedding. All replacements are bred on the farm and housed in loose housing and are bedded on straw.

As existing the agricultural unit achieves yields of nearly 10,500 litres/cow/year, with cows being milked twice/day in the existing 16/16 parlour. The applicant advises that the parlour is now 32 years old and is inefficient and too small for the growing herd.

Currently the farm spreads 80% of slurry arising using an umbilical system on adjacent land and the remaining slurry is spread by tanker on outlying fields. All the slurry is spread, and forage cut, from the land adjacent to the farm and does not require crossing or use of public highways.

In terms of employment the farm currently employs four full time staff (including the applicant and his father). Of these only the applicant and his father live on-site with the remaining staff living in the locality.

History

NP/14/0244 – Fforest Farm, Newport – Retention of 2 stable buildings and existing track and siting of horse walker (resubmission of NP/13/0367) – Pending determination

NP/13/0367 - Fforest Farm, Newport – Resiting of stable block and associated access (as approved under NP/10/508), erection of horse walker and new access track and erection of new stable block (all retrospective) – Withdrawn – 18 March 2014

NP/12/0561 - Fforest Farm, Newport - Creation of a new trainers dwelling including business rooms ancillary to the racing stables – Refused – 16 January 2013

NP/10/508 - Fforest Farm, Newport - Proposed new stables and horse walker for existing racing stables (resubmission of NP/10/289) – Approved – 18 January 2011

NP/10/289 - Fforest Farm, Newport - New stables & horse-walker for existing racing stables - Refused - 18 August 2010

NP/09/348 - Fforest Farm, Newport - Change of use to mixed agriculture/equestrian, 7 wooden stables, training gallop (retrospective) – Approved – 1 October 2009

NP/09/023 - Part field OS8922 Fforest Farm, Newport - Continued use of field OS8922 for further 5 years as site for 3 caravans – Refused – 18 March 2009

NP/08/172 – Fforest Farm, Newport – Sand School – Approved – 17 June 2008

NP/03/599 - Part field OS8922 Fforest Farm, Newport - Continued use of field OS 8922 for further 5 years as site for 3 caravans – Approved – 14 January 2004

NP/99/017 - Part field OS8922 Fforest Farm, Newport - Continued use of Part field OS 8922 for further 5 years as a site for 3 caravans – Approved – 25 February 1999

NP/95/142 - Fforest Farm, Newport - Agricultural building for cattle and store - Approved - 31 May 1995

NP/93/552 – Fforest Farm, Newport - Cont use of 3 caravans – Approved – 18 January 1994

Constraints

- Biodiversity Issue
- Historic Landscape
- Rights of Way Inland within 50m
- ROW Coast Path within 10m
- Recreation Character Areas

Current Proposal

The application proposes the erection of 2 new agricultural buildings at the site. These comprises of a dairy building and a loose house/cubicle building. In addition it is proposed to establish a surrounding concrete hardstanding and provide a realignment to an existing track at the site.

Dairy Building

The dairy building is proposed to replace the existing outdated parlour and is sited along the south facing axis of the existing buildings. This proposed building measures 66m long by 13.6m wide and upto a ridge height of 5.73m to be integrated with the existing farm building on site.

Internally the the dairy building is proposed to include a new milking parlour, collecting yard, office wash-room, dairy and chemical stored. There is an existing building adjoining this proposed building which is to converted to provide handling facilities for the proposed dairy building and this element does not form part of the application.

The building is proposed to be finished in pre-cast concrete to 1.8m, profile steel sheeting to its eaves (slate blue) and profile cement sheeting (natural) to the roof and clear plastic roof lights.

Loose House/Cubicle Building

This building is proposed to be sited in line with the proposed dairy building approximately 8m from its east elevation. The building includes two pitched roof formations with its longest axis measuring 36.7m across and with a depth of 26m. This building measures 5.73m to ridge height.

The building is proposed to accommodate 34 cubicles and also loose housing for cattle with a feed bunker separating the two areas. The building is proposed to be finished in pre-cast concrete to 1.8m (natural), Yorkshire boarding to eaves (dark stained) and profile cement sheeting (natural) to the roof and clear plastic roof lights.

Concrete Hardstanding and Track Works

A new concrete hardstanding area and perimeter track around the site measures approximately 1,375m² in area whilst some works are proposed to realign an existing farm track to the south of the site.

Employment

The application supporting information explains that it is expected that the increase in herd size would help fund the necessary new parlour and dairy and would require one additional full-time employee.

The application was supported with the following information;

- Design & Access Statement
- Supporting Statement/Policy Appraisal
- Transport Statement

Key Issues

The application raises the following planning matters:-

- Policy and Principle of Development
- Visual Amenity and Special Qualities of the National Park
- Highway Safety, Access and Parking
- Neighbouring Amenity and Privacy
- Water and Drainage

Policy and Principle of Development

The site is part of an existing active farm comprising of 200 milking cows and the proposed development involves plans to increase production, welfare and efficiency on site with buildings to improve the dairy unit and cattle housing. The buildings proposed would result in activity increasing at the farm to grow to 300 milking cows with the provision of 34 additional cubicles and loose housing areas. Planning Policy Wales (Edition 6, February 2014) (*Paragraph 7.6.5 Planning Policy Wales (Edition 6, February 2014)* and Technical Advice Note 6 acknowledges support for farming and particularly sustainable agriculture. (*Paragraph 6.1.1. Technical Advice Note 6: Planning for Sustainable Rural Communities July 2010*). In addition Local Development Plan Policy 7 criterion (b) identifies support for housing for essential farming.

In view of the fact that the scheme will allow better on site processing for the farm alongside a small increase in herd size it is considered that the principle of development is acceptable in line with the aims of both National and Local planning policy. The key material considerations in this instance will relate to the impact of the development upon the special qualities of the National Park, highway safety, neighbouring amenity and the water drainage network.

Visual Amenity and Special Qualities of the National Park

Policy 8 of the Pembrokeshire Coast National Park Local Development Plan (LDP) is a strategic policy which refers to the special qualities of the National Park and lists priorities to ensure that these special qualities will be protected and enhanced. Policy 15 of the LDP seeks the conservation of the Pembrokeshire Coast National Park with criteria 'a' and 'b' resisting development that would cause significant visual intrusion and/or, that would be insensitively and unsympathetically sited within the landscape. Criterion 'c' resists development that would introduce or intensify a use which is incompatible with its location. Criteria 'd' and 'e' resists development that would fail to harmonise with, or enhance the landform and landscape character of the National Park, and/or fail to incorporate important traditional features.

Policy 29 of the LDP requires all development proposals to be well designed in terms of place and local distinctiveness (criterion 'a'). Policy 30 of the LDP seeks to avoid development that is of an incompatible scale with its surroundings (criterion 'b') or is visually intrusive (criterion'd'). The site accommodates a number of existing buildings about the yard which lies to the north east of the dwelling at Fforest Farm. The buildings are typical agricultural barns with external timber boarding and concrete roof panels. The buildings proposed, whilst being of a large scale, are typical of those constructed on modern dairy units.

The dairy building is proposed to be sited alongside the existing most south facing building and run across the site in a horizontal fashion. The eaves of the new building would extend approximately 1m above the eaves of the existing building and abut upto the building. The cattle accommodation building proposed would be sited to the east of this new structure in an 'L' shaped formation. This building would consist of two pitched roof structures and measure upto 5.73m in height. The development would involve some remodelling of the existing land profile and the building would therefore be read as part of the context of existing buildings.

In terms of siting it is considered that the siting of both buildings proposed is acceptable. The buildings form a small continuation of the existing yard and buildings and although large in scale will be read as part of the farm. In terms of wider landscape views parts of the site are visible from the coast path to the north and north west, however, the buildings proposed would be restricted by intervening buildings which include the existing large barns and the topography is such that these will not stand out prominently in the landscape.

With regard to landscaping the scheme will involve the loss of two short sections of hedgerow, totalling 75m, as these would fall within the construction site. The applicant has advised that these hedgerows are 'gappy' and of poor quality consisting of gorse bushes and overgrown hawthorn. In addition an ash tree would be removed to facilitate the development. The scheme proposes planting to comprise a block of mixed trees and shrubs measuring 380m² in an area of approximately 30m by 20m. The provision of this new planting to form a visual buffer along the east elevation of the proposed building, will help soften the appearance of the buildings and also mitigate for the loss of existing vegetation.

The application includes details of all proposed lighting points and a description of the lighting and lighting level. The internal lights are to be downward facing and located above eaves level to prevent spill or direct, distant views of luminaires. The level of lighting has been restricted to the minimum requirements for the necessary operation of the unit. External lighting is to be downward facing, low intensity and would be timed and have light-level sensors. The lighting proposed is considered to be acceptable in the interests of visual amenity.

In summary of the issues it is considered that the development will not have an adverse impact upon the character and appearance of the area and special qualities of the National Park and **as** such will comply with the aims of policies 8, 9, 15, 29 and 30.

Highway Safety, Access and Parking

Policies 52 and 53 of the Local Development Plan refer to sustainable transport and the traffic impacts of proposed development requiring that new development has not adverse impact upon traffic safety. The application has been supported by a Transport Assessment which looks in detail at the existing use of the stable enterprise, the likely traffic generation and access provisions.

The buildings proposed as part of the scheme involve an increase in herd size of approximately 100 cows and the applicant has provided a calculation of traffic movements as a result of this increase.

It identifies that the vast majority of vehicular movements associated with the site will be car movements associated with the increase in works at the farm rather than HGV or tractor-trailer movements. The number of HGV movements would increase by 55 movements per year which are related to feed and bedding deliveries.

Initial concerns were raised by the Welsh Government Trunk Road Agency in relation to highway impacts and the fact that highway improvements, conditioned as part of a planning permission relating to the adjoining stable business, had not been implemented on site. An early response received from the Trunk Road Agency directed the Authority to refuse the application. Following receipt of this objection the applicant put forward a revised Transport Statement having taken into account the proposed development and other existing business served by the access track including the racing stable enterprise.

The Welsh Government Trunk Road Agency has since withdrawn their objection to the scheme stating;

"Following review of the revised TS that indicates a reduced traffic impact, Welsh Government (Transport) withdraws its previous objection to the cattle accommodation building. In accordance with point 5.8 of the TS, the applicant accepts that conditions relating to the racing stables application at the site can also be applied to this particular application and these are therefore directed to be applied to any consent that your Authority may grant."

The letter advises that the conditions shall include the following to be carried out prior to any development on site;

- The repositioning of the hedge at the access by at least 1m behind the visibility splay
- Surfacing of access

The conditions suggested are considered reasonable in the interests of providing a safe access both to the new agricultural buildings and to the racing stables enterprise which is subject to a separate submission. In conclusion and subject to completion of the improvements to the access that

the scheme will have no adverse impact upon highway safety and complies with the aims of policies 52 and 53.

Neighbouring Amenity and Privacy

Policies 29 and 30 of the Local Development Plan **see**k to protect community cohesion and health and to avoid incompatible development that would lead to a significant adverse impact upon amenity. The supporting text at paragraph 4.136 explains that the policy aims *"to protect the amenity enjoyed in people in their residences, workspaces and recreational areas. Amenity is defined as those elements in the appearance and layout of town and countryside which makes for pleasant life rather than mere existence. Anything ugly, dirty, noisy, crowded, intrusive or uncomfortable is likely to adversely affect amenity".*

The site lies in a remote location in the open countryside and there are no immediate neighbours to the site of the buildings proposed for retention. No objections or letters of representation have been received in relation to this particular scheme. In terms of potential impacts upon amenity normal concerns with this form of proposal generally relate to odour, noise and dust.

The nearest residential properties (apart from the farmhouse) are located approximately 180m to 240m west of the farm and include dwellings Hen-Ty-Llaeth and Fforest Cottage and the holiday cottages at Aberfforest. Any impacts upon amenity would be limited due to the distances between the farming unit and residences and the position and topography of the land. The facilities include proposals to improve animal welfare and the level of noise should therefore reduce.

In terms of slurry the increase in herd size will increase slurry output and the applicant has put forward figures of the slurry storage. This shows that the volume of slurry produced would increase from 1306m³ a month to 1,958m³ a month. This is considered to be a small increase that will not harm amenity in the surrounding area. No objections have been received from Environmental Health. As such the scheme is considered to comply with the aims of policies 29 and 30 in that there will no adverse harm to neighbouring amenity.

Water and Drainage

In terms of water and slurry output the Authority consulted with Natural Resources Wales and an early response received requested further information.

Information received from the applicant confirmed that water is presently piped to existing drainage ditches (400m in length) to the north of the farm which drain to a pipe installed approximately 25 years ago which runs underground before discharging directly into the sea at Aber Ysgol. NRW advise that discharging surface water to 400m of open ditch will provide a certain amount of attention and not create any additional flood risk in the area. As such there is no objection to the surface water management in this instance.

The applicant explains that currently slurry discharges form the silage clamps which drain directly into the lagoons although the applicant is looking to install a silage effluent reception pit in the near future. The two lagoons are lined with clay and have a freeboard of 0.75m. NRW raise no objection to this arrangement and advise that any new channels or pipes that convey slurry to existing storage must be designed to meet the requirements of The Water Resources (Control of Pollution) (Silage, Slurry and Agriculture Fuel Oil) (Wales) ['SSAFO'] Regulations 2010.

It is considered that the development is acceptable in relation to its impact in terms of water and drainage and accords with the aims of Policy 32.

Conclusion

Following an assessment of the planning merits of the proposal it is concluded that the buildings proposed will allow an increase production, welfare and efficiency on site with buildings to improve the dairy unit and cattle housing. The buildings and extent of agriculture to take place will have no adverse impact upon the special qualities of the National Park and are designed sympathetically to the existing environs of the site.

Subject to conditions to control the extent of development including highway access improvements and provision of landscaping the scheme is considered to meet with the aims of Planning Policy Wales (Edition 6, February 2014), Technical Advice Note 6 – Planning for Sustainable Rural Communities (TAN 6, July 2010) and policies 1, 7, 8, 9, 15, 29, 30, 31, 32, 33, 34, 52 and 53 of the Pembrokeshire Coast National Park Local Development Plan (Adopted 2010) and is recommended for approval.

Recommendation

The application be approved subject to conditions to require the following:

- Time limit to implement.
- In accordance with approved drawings.
- No development to take place until the existing hedge is repositioned 1 metre behind the visibility splay following receipt of method statement.
- No development to take place until surfacing of existing access in either concrete or bituminous macadam for first 25m from edge of carriageway is carried out.
- Access and visibility improvements retained to serve farm.
- Landscaping to take place in first planting season in accordance with details.
- Lighting in accordance with approved details.











Item d)

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